

**Testimony of Stephen T. Hanshaw
Before the Children Committee
Opposing Senate Bill 328
February 26, 2013**

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Stephen Hanshaw. I am currently a junior at Sacred Heart University, majoring in Political Science, with minors in Criminal Justice, Mathematics and Philosophy. I am proud to say that I am also an intern in the general assembly this session. I come before you today in staunch opposition to SB 328.

SB 328 - AN ACT CONCERNING MINORS AND VIOLENT POINT-AND-SHOOT VIDEO GAMES, which I believe will prove to be simply ineffective if put into effect. The bill discusses the idea of using facsimile firearms in these point-and-shoot games in arcades. My first point of dissent comes with the implications which this language brings about. Many of the games you will be discussing of course do use these very control devices, but ones which are red, blue, orange, and lack many of the necessary mechanisms which a firearm possess. In this sense, these game controllers may parody the appearance of some firearms, but do not mimic the actual product in any sense other than possessing a trigger. In this sense, I believe that the desire to restrict the use of such games is actually beneficial to no one.

I believe that there is also a great deal of confusion over the idea that there is a necessary correlation between video games and violence. I must assure you that I do not believe this is a legitimate thought in any sense, given the number of persons throughout the country, and the world, who play these games and are still very positively contributing members of our society. In a previous public hearing for a matter very similar to this, testimony was given by a leading expert on this very subject. There are a number of those who believe that we can make our children's lives safer by sheltering them from each and every violent influence they may come into contact with, but that is simply not the case. In many cases, these very games which some believe send children on the path of violence are actually used as an outlet to get rid of stress and frustration which may come with daily activities, or even as a fun activity used to socialize with friends. If we take away this outlet, I fear it may very well be the case that this frustration must be turned toward actual violent tendencies, rather than animated ones.

A completely separate issue comes into question when you consider those whose businesses will be affected. If this bill were to pass, consider the small arcade owner who would then have to work to make sure that the majority of his or her customers did not use a machine which is a part of the business. Given that the great deal of patrons of an arcade are indeed those who are minors, or slightly older, you will be incurring a great deal of lost revenue on

each and every business which this bill will affect. Another thing to consider is, who will be responsible for reimbursing these small business owners for their lost income, or will there even be any compensation at all for those whose businesses see a decrease in revenue? These are all things which must be considered if this bill is to continue in the legislative process.

I know that we are all very concerned about the increasing prevalence of violence in our society, but I do not believe that this will do anything to counteract it. Each of these major incidents and mass shooting are terrible indeed, but I believe we must focus our efforts on meaningful legislation, rather than on something which is a non-issue. There is little to no correlation between those who play video games and perpetrate these violent acts which shake our nation. I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this bill, and I urge you to take all of these concerns into consideration.